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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-CHINA SUMMIT

¶1. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies continued to give significant coverage April 20 to the alleged bribery scandal involving former Presidential Office deputy secretary-general Chen Che-nan, while Chinese President Hu Jintao's U.S. trip and his scheduled meeting with U.S. President George W. Bush only received moderate coverage. The pro-independence "Liberty Times," Taiwan's biggest daily, spent half of its page two on the Bush-Hu meeting and ran a banner headline that read: "China Hopes Bush Will Openly Express Opposition to [Taiwan] Independence, But the United States Rejects [Such a Request]." The pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" ran a wire service news story on its page two with the headline: "U.S. Congress Severely Criticizes China's Human Rights [Records]." The pro-status quo "China Times" devoted two thirds of its page two on Hu's speech delivered at the Microsoft headquarters and what will be discussed during the upcoming Bush-Hu meeting. "China Times" Washington correspondent Liu Ping said in a news analysis that while there are reports about Taipei's anxiety over the Bush-Hu meeting, Taiwan can remain cautiously optimistic as the Taiwan issue will receive a moderate treatment, namely, the same U.S.-Taiwan policy as before. The pro-unification "United Daily News" ran a news story on its page four with the headline: "[U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Robert] Zoellick: Bush Expects Bian to [Keep] His Five-Point Pledge [to the U.S.]." A separate "United Daily News" news story quoted Taiwan's representative to Washington David Lee as saying that Washington has promised Taiwan it will resist Beijing's new pressure on Taiwan.

¶2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, "Liberty Times" Washington correspondent Nadia Tsao said in a news analysis that as the ideas that China will not challenge the United States and that Washington is interested in accepting China as a hegemonic power in the international community are gaining more and more momentum, it will be more difficult for Taiwan to directly challenge Beijing in Washington D.C. The "International Outlook" column in the "China Times" said what's more noteworthy is whether Beijing and Washington will, in their discussions, link the Taiwan issue with issues such as North Korea's and Iran's nuclear programs. "China Times" Beijing correspondent Angela Yu noted in a news analysis that the U.S. side has done "vaccination" work to lower China's expectation over U.S. treatment of the Taiwan issue and Bush is not expected to make any harsh comments on Taiwan. Liu Kuan-teh, a Taipei-based political commentator, opined in the limited-circulation, pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" that for the Bush-Hu meeting, "more attention should be focused on the extent to which the Bush administration can transform China into a 'responsible stakeholder.'" End summary.

A) "Lien Chan's Pro-China Stand Damages Taiwan's Diplomatic Efforts"

Washington correspondent Nadia Tsao said in a news analysis in the

pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 600,000] (4/20):

"[Chinese President] Hu Jintao's move to play up the KMT-CCP forum prior to his visit to the United States was clearly aimed at promoting to the Bush administration his strategy of peaceful development [across the Taiwan Strait] when he visits Washington D.C. It was also aimed at highlighting Beijing's intention to stabilize and improve cross-Strait relations and emphasizing the fact that the Bian administration, which Beijing has constantly refused to talk to, is the only trouble [for cross-Strait relations]. Evidently, Beijing is fully confident that both the United States and China can join hands to fight [Taiwan] independence and use their united-front efforts to crash any force in Taiwan that opposes them by turning democracy into a mechanism that divides Taiwan and fuels infighting on the island. It is a pity that Lien Chan has assisted Hu with his show of peace in Washington while keeping mum about China's military threats and suppression of Taiwan's space in the international community.

"[The ideas] that China will not challenge the United States and that Washington is interested in accepting China as a hegemonic power in the international community are gaining more and more momentum. As a result, it will be more and more difficult for Taiwan to directly challenge Beijing in Washington D.C. In the face of such an increasingly difficult international climate, the Taiwan leaders should ponder how the island can survive in peace while not surrendering itself [to China]."

B) "North Korea's Nuclear Program, Iran's Nuclear Program, and the Taiwan Issue [to Be Discussed] in the Bush-Hu Meeting"

The "International Outlook" column in the pro-status quo "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] commented (4/20):

"U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick said [Wednesday] during a TV interview that during the talks between President George W. Bush and [Chinese President] Hu Jintao, both sides will discuss North Korea's nuclear program, Iran's nuclear program, and the

Taiwan issue. This is the first time that a high-ranking American official has revealed that the nuclear programs on the Korean Peninsula and in Iran will be included in the agenda of the U.S.-China summit. ... What's more noteworthy is whether [Beijing and Washington] will, in their discussions, link the Taiwan issue with these two issues, since the former issue is something that Washington is interested in talking about but Beijing tries to avoid, while the latter ones are those that Washington does not want to talk about but China will not easily let go of. ...

"In terms of the Taiwan issue, some [new] changes have occurred over the past few years. Many China hands have discovered that Hu is much tougher than [former Chinese President] Jiang Zemin when it comes to the principles of the Chinese Communist Party and China as a nation. [Under Hu's leadership,] China enacted the Anti-Secession Law while at the same time is pursuing a conciliatory policy toward Taiwan. ... Since the DPP government in Taiwan wants to proceed with its roadmap of scrapping the National Unification Council and pushing for a referendum on Taiwan's new constitution, Beijing will thus turn to Washington for its opinion, [sources said]. If the United States continues to stall Beijing off with the three [U.S.-China] communiqués and the Taiwan Relations Act, Hu can thus use [excuses like] lack of influence and peace talks as [vague] resolutions to the nuclear problems on the Korean Peninsula and Iran. ..."

C) "The United States and China Have Done Vaccination Work Over the Taiwan Issue"

Beijing correspondent Angela Yu said in a news analysis in the pro-status quo "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] (4/20):

"... During his meeting with [KMT Honorary Chairman] Lien Chan two days prior to his departure for a trip to the United States, Hu Jintao announced 'four suggestions' [with regard to cross-Strait situation] and expressed his hope to resume talks with Taiwan as early as possible. Even though the Chinese officials involved in Taiwan affairs denied that such a move was aimed at showing the American people China's goodwill gesture to Taiwan before Hu's

meeting with U.S. President George W. Bush, Washington nonetheless saw Beijing's 'actions.'

"The United States believes that tensions across the Taiwan Strait have been alleviated recently, and Bush does not want to see any new problems related to the 'Taiwan issue' arise unexpectedly while people inside Washington are still debating over 'China's rise' and 'China's threat.' A well-informed source in the U.S. revealed that during the negotiations between Washington and Beijing, both sides have already done some 'vaccination work' in an attempt to lower Beijing's expectations over the U.S. treatment of the Taiwan issue. In addition to directly indicating that the Taiwan issue is not a focus of the Bush-Hu meeting, Washington also added that even if Bush mentions the Taiwan issue, his remarks will not go beyond what he said before but will simply emphasize that [Washington] 'does not want to see any unilateral attempt by either side to alter the status quo.' ..."

D) "Can China Really Be a Responsible Stakeholder?"

Liu Kan-teh, a Taipei-based political commentator, opined in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] (4/20):

"Chinese President Hu Jintao is scheduled to meet US President George W. Bush in the White House today. While most analyses have said the discussion would focus on trade disputes and issues related to the Korean Peninsular and Iran, more attention should be focused on the extent to which the Bush administration can transform China into a 'responsible stakeholder.' ...

"Therefore, instead of wildly guessing whether Bush will verbally condemn recent moves by Taiwan's leader to provoke Beijing when he meets Hu, the public and the local media should take into account the larger political picture of how China should bear responsibility internationally as a rising power. Moreover, discussion should also focus on how a democratic Taiwan can help shape China's belligerent and undemocratic mentality. Only by distinguishing Taiwan's democracy and peace-loving free will from China's military-oriented authoritarian rule will the global community fully understand the need to breed a politically democratic and economically liberal China."

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